Presence of Foreign Mercenaries in Sri Lanka

30. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY:

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA:

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has conveyed its concern to the United States over the reported presence of American mercenaries in Sri Lanka who are helping the security forces in dealing with the Tamil militants;

(b) if so, what is US Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that mercenaries from Britain, Israel and some other African and West European countries are also helping the Sri Lankan security forces; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) Government has expressed its concern over the reported presence of U.S. personnel with the Sri Lankan armed forces.

(b) An official Spokesman of the U.S. State Department denied on January 13th that there were any US mercenaries in Sri Lanka;

(c) Government are aware of the presence of personnel from Britain, Israel and some other countries who are helping the Sri Lankan forces.

(d) Government have been following such developments in Sri Lanka closely and have conveyed their anxiety and concern at the induction of outside forces, which only complicates further the search for a solution.

Offer of Technical Expertise by United Nations Environment Programme for Ganga Action Plan

31. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal has been received from the United Nations Environment Programme offering technical expertise for Ganga Action Plan; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R ANSARI): (a) During informal discussion the United Nations Environment Programme had indicated that it was in a position to make available a panel of consultants for sharing information and expertise about pollution control in the context of the Ganga Action Plan. It was indicated to the United Nations Environment Programme that this could be considered at a later stage when the execution of Ganga Action Plan has made some progress and the relevant issues to be addressed identified. However, no specific offer of assistance for any project has been received.

(b) Does not arise.

Africa Fund

32. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the detailed aims and objectives of the Africa Fund;

(b) what are the names of the countries which have contributed to the Africa Fund so far and the amounts contributed by each of them; and

(c) whether the appeal for contributing towards the Fund has also been made to the countries outside the Non-aligned Movement and if so, what is the response of those countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI) (a) The objectives of the Africa Fund are:

(i) to strengthen the economic and financially capability of the Frontline